



Governors' Policy

*'From tiny acorns, mighty oak trees grow, watered
and nurtured by God's love'*

'For with God, nothing is impossible' Luke 1:37

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Introduction

“Through the nurturing hands of God, we aspire for all children to become confident, emotionally resilient and compassionate individuals who achieve personal success through strength of character and a love of learning”

The Governing Body must act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interest of the school and be open about the decisions it makes and the actions it takes. Governors are the strategic leaders of our school and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education outlined through our vision. Governing Bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Governing Bodies are the key strategic decision-making body of every school. It is their role to set the school's strategic framework and to ensure all statutory duties are met.

The Governing Body should ensure that the school has a medium to long-term vision for its future. The Governing Body should also ensure that there is a robust strategy in place for achieving its vision. This strategy should address the fundamental questions of where we are now, where do we want to be, and how are we going to get there.

The Governing Body should set and safeguard a school ethos of high expectations of everyone in the school community. This includes high expectations for the behaviour, progress and attainment of all pupils in the school, and for the conduct and professionalism of both staff and governors.

2. Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff

Governing Bodies should work to support and strengthen the leadership of the Headteacher and hold them to account for the day-to-day running of the school, including the performance management of teachers. Governing bodies should play a strategic role and avoid routine involvement in operational matters. It should focus strongly on holding the Headteacher to account for exercising her professional judgement in these matters and of all their other duties.

3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent

Governing Bodies are responsible for making sure their school's money is well spent. They should do this by making sure they have at least one governor with specific skills and experience of financial matters, and by asking questions such as:

- Are we allocating our resources in line with our strategic priorities?
- Are we making full use of all our assets and efficient use of all our financial resources?
- Are other schools buying things cheaper or getting better results with less spending per pupil?
- How can we get better value for money from our budget?

Source: DfE, Governors' Handbook, September 2014

This policy summarises the 'Terms of Reference Regulations of 2000', which set down the legal framework for governing bodies.

Key Contacts

Position	Name	Contact Details (email/phone)
Headteacher	Susan Calvert	Head@braywoodfirstschool.co.uk
Bursar	Fiona Williams	Finance@braywoodfirstschool.co.uk
Clerk to the Governors	TBA	Governors@braywoodfirstschool.co.uk

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility of the Governing Body

The Governing Body fulfils a largely strategic role in the running of the school.

The Governing Body will establish a strategic framework for the school by:

- Setting aims and objectives of the school;
- Setting policies to achieve those aims and objectives;
- Setting targets to achieve those aims and objectives.

The Governing Body will monitor and evaluate progress towards the achievement of its aims and objectives and regularly review the strategic framework for the school in light of that progress.

In establishing and monitoring the strategic framework the Governing Body considers any advice given by the headteacher and must comply with any trust deed relating to the school.

The Governing Body will act as a critical friend to the headteacher and will support the head and offer constructive criticism.

Responsibility of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school and for the implementation of the Governing Body's strategic framework. She will advise the Governing Body in determining and reviewing its strategic framework for the school. In particular the Headteacher will formulate for consideration by the Governing Body the aims and objectives for the school, policies to achieve its aims and objectives and targets for the school's development plan.

The Headteacher reports to the Governing Body on progress towards achieving its aims and objectives, three times a year in her Headteacher's Report.

Responsibility of the Clerk to Governors

The clerk to Governors is appointed by the school and manages all the affairs of the Governing Body. She attends the LEA training and feeds back to our Governors. She communicates meetings, training and updates all of the relevant records.

It is the responsibility of the Clerk to take the minutes of all meetings and keep these filed appropriately.

Delegation of the Governing Body's Functions

In deciding how to delegate its functions, the Governing Body must consider its overall strategic purpose and the responsibility of the Headteacher for the operational management of the school. The Headteacher will comply with any reasonable direction made by the Governing Body in performing any function it delegates to her.

Governors obviously bring a wide range of skills and knowledge to the school when they enrol as a governor. These skills are obviously taken into consideration when delegating the role of specific individuals on the Governing Body.

Governor Code of Conduct

General

- Our principal concern as a governing body (GB) and as individual governors is the welfare of the school.
- Our main focus is on school improvement and the raising of standards of pupil performance in the school.
- We recognise our responsibility for determining, monitoring and reviewing the policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.
- We recognise that the headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy and the day-to-day management of the school.
- We understand that all governors are equal members of the Governing Body.
- We understand that we have no authority to act individually unless the Governing Body has given us the delegated authority to do so and it is legally permissible.
- We know that we must act fairly and without prejudice in all matters, including our responsibilities as a good employer.
- We will encourage open government.
- We will give careful consideration to the impact of our decisions on people, organisations and the school.

Commitment

- We recognise the need to commit time and energy to be an effective governor.
- We will each involve ourselves in the work of the Governing Body by attending meetings, serving on committee(s) and accepting a fair share of responsibility.
- We acknowledge our needs for development and training as governors.

Relationships

- We will work as a team.
- We will develop effective working relationships with the Headteacher and staff, parents, the CSA and the diocese, and representatives of the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe confidentiality as required.
- We will exercise prudence and tact if contentious issues affecting the school arise outside the Governing Body.

Conduct

- We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings but accept collective responsibility for decisions made by the governing body.
- We will speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body only when authorised to do so.
- In making or responding to criticisms or complaints about the Governing Body, we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Body.
- Our visits to school as governors will be within the protocol agreed by the Governing Body and staff.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school.

Organisation at Braywood

As a voluntary controlled school, the instrument of government instructs that our Governing Body must be made up of the following:

- 2 Foundation Governors
- 1 LEA Governors
- 3 (co-opted) Community Governor
- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Staff Governors and 1 Headteacher

The Governing Body at Braywood usually meets 4 times a year as a whole Governing Body and then further meetings for performance management, visits, planning the agenda etc. One of these meetings is for training. Committees are set up by the Governing Body to carry out most of the detail work and bring in additional expertise to work on specific issues. Having a committee ensures that we can enable the main Governing Body meetings to concentrate on strategy and so help to use scarce governor time effectively. To this end our Finance Committee meets prior to the full Governing Body meeting to discuss the finances in more detail.

If relevant we have an additional 'extended schools' meeting to discuss issues relevant to our Braywood Extra. Additional committees are set up as and when required e.g. Ofsted SEF to discuss more specific requirements.

Our Governing Body meetings always involve a review of our policies, the Headteacher's Report, a financial statement and a demonstration of a curriculum area to ensure that our governors are familiar with the teaching and learning procedures of our school. Standards and data are annually discussed with all our governors as a regular area of our school improvement alongside appropriate targets, which often form part of the Headteacher's performance review. The School Development Plan is a working document that is used by governors and staff.

The Governing Body must agree and implement a performance management policy setting out how teacher appraisal at the school is to be implemented. This includes the Headteacher's appraisal alongside our School Improvement Partner. The Governing Body must review the performance management policy annually and amend it as it sees fit.

The Finance Committee scrutinise the budget, our school's asset management plan, teacher's salaries etc. to ensure transparency and value for money. The comments and conclusions from this meeting are always fed back into the full Governing Body meeting for an inclusive approach that provides clarity of all members.

There are many areas within the school that involve governor scrutiny including a review of our policies. Some are considered annually such as performance management, curriculum, health and safety and safeguarding issues, other policies are visited on a regular cycle of improvement often depending upon the school development plan.

(See Appendix 1 for further details on the Functions of the Governing Body and its Committees)

Governor Visits

Visits to school enable governors:

- To offer the school a source of support and to be a 'critical friend'
- To help governors know the school better.
- To inform any decisions that the governor's make.
- To recognise and celebrate the achievements of the school.
- Ofsted inspectors will be interested in both the process of governor observation and the content.

Governors need to satisfy themselves that school fulfils the role expected of them by our families. We have a timetable of visits that run alongside the school's review cycle in which all governors are encouraged to see the school in action. These visits help governors to learn more about how the school functions from day-to-day. If the Governing Body has greater first-hand knowledge of the school; their ability to advise the school increases, together with their ability to make informed self-evaluation or strategic decisions.

Code of Conduct During Visits

Each Governor when making a visit should follow this policy.

There are a number of reasons to for governors to make formal visits to the school. The purpose of these guidelines is to suggest how the visit could be conducted in a way that governors and staff gain the most from the experience. Visits should have a clear purpose and can be used for:

- Meeting with staff
- Looking at pupils' work
- Reviewing areas and resources of the school
- Observing typical lessons in particular subjects, key stages or classes
- The use made of the buildings or the site and the condition of the premises
- Additional educational needs
- Impact of the religious character
- Lunch and break times
- Deployment of staff, e.g. caretaker, office staff, teaching assistants

Each governor is assigned to a specific curriculum area and often the visits would be specific to this subject. At other times though the governors are seeing the school in action and will be observing lessons from different curriculum areas.

What to do before the visit?

- Check the agreed policy for governors' visits
- Clarify the purpose of the visit. Is it linked to the School Improvement Plan? What are the relevant school policies?
- Discuss the proposed agenda with the staff involved. How do they want governors to integrate into the lesson? Would note taking be allowed? It might be possible for you to see a copy of the lesson plan beforehand.
- Be clear beforehand exactly what you are observing. Try to prepare questions for staff in advance. The teacher may be able to guide you on this.
- Discuss with the Headteacher/class teacher if any supporting information is available – OFSTED report, improvement plan, performance data.
- Ensure that you are familiar with health and safety procedures

During the lesson

- Be punctual, keep to the agreed timetable but be flexible.
- Remember you are there to learn, it is a visit not an inspection.
- Decide with the teacher how you will be introduced and what your role in the classroom will be.
- Get involved with the children if the teacher has agreed that this would be appropriate.
- Observe discretely. Remember that excessive note taking can be disconcerting and may make your visit look like an inspection.
- Don't distract the teacher during the lesson from his/her work but be prepared to talk and show interest.
- Listen to staff and pupils, be courteous, friendly not critical.

After the lesson

- Discuss what you have observed with the teacher. Use the opportunity to clarify any issue you are unclear about. For example, did your presence have any impact on the atmosphere in the classroom? If so, how?
- Refer to the purpose of the visit. Consider together whether it has been achieved.

- Be open, honest, and positive.
- Discuss your observations with the Headteacher. Be prepared to take the comments of others on board.
- Reflect: how did that go? has the visit enhanced relationships? have I learned more about the school? Have I helped the governing body fulfil its duties?

Things you may consider when visiting the classroom

- Relationship between staff and pupils
- Relationships between pupils
- Variety of teaching styles
- Availability and role of support staff
- Behaviour and attitude of pupils - are they attentive, encouraged, motivated, listening, questioning, responding, rewarded?
- Enjoyment and enthusiasm of both staff and pupils
- How the pupils are grouped
- How different abilities are catered for
- Children's work
- Displays, is the school attractive
- Ethos - the atmosphere and values that are evident (are high expectations, encouragement, praise, equality of opportunity apparent?)
- Environment and working conditions, what is the school like to work in? is this a good place to work and play? What are the good points? What can be improved
- Quality and quantity of equipment and resources

Monitoring and Evaluating the Governing Body

The governing body has a statutory duty to oversee the policies and direction of the school, to monitor its standards and be held to account for its conduct and performance.

Governors monitor the school in a number of ways including:

- Visits and talking to staff and pupils
- Reviewing the Headteacher's Report and asking relevant/searching questions
- Review of the school policies.
- Regular review of data through visits and committees
- Review of the School Development Plan
- Finance monitoring as outlined in the Finance Policy
- Performance Management of the Headteacher
- Reviewing benchmarking with other schools.

Appendix 1

Statutory Functions of the Governing Body and its Committees

A Governing Body can delegate its statutory functions to a committee, a governor or the headteacher, subject to prescribed restrictions, described below. The Governing Body must determine the membership and proceedings of any committee. Each committee must have a chair that is either appointed by the GB or elected by the committee.

The Governing Body may remove the chair of a committee from office at any time. The Governing Body must appoint a clerk to each committee, who may be a governor but may not be the Headteacher.

It is for the governing body at a quorate meeting to establish a committee and determine its powers, membership and how the chair is to be appointed. The Governing Body must review its committee structure annually. For each committee, the Governing Body at a quorate meeting, must decide:

- A title
- The constitution of the committee and its membership
- Procedures for appointing the committee chair and vice chair
- The committee's terms of reference

The committee members must ensure

- There is a named chair and vice chair
- There is an agenda for each meeting, circulated not less than seven days in advance except in instances where the chair calls a meeting as a matter of urgency
- The meetings are properly clerked (the clerk may be a governor)
- Minutes are produced and published
- Voting is properly conducted (the chair has a second or casting vote except in two instances: where the chair is an associate member (only full governors may have a casting vote); in the case of a panel selecting a headteacher or deputy head, where no-one has a second vote)
- Confidentiality is maintained

Other requirements

- There must be at least three governors on each committee
- Associate Members may sit on committees provided that the majority of members are governors: the GB will decide what voting rights the Associates may have and there must be a majority of full governors present when any vote is taken
- The Headteacher may attend all committee meetings, except those dealing with his or her pay and related matters or where a conflict of interest may arise
- The GB retains final responsibility for any decisions taken by its committees

Functions that may not be delegated and must be decided by the full GB

- The constitution of the GB and the Instrument of Government
- Committee structures and their delegated powers and responsibilities, and to receive reports from the committees
- Election of the chair and vice chair of the GB, and removal of the chair
- The suspension of elected governors
- Appointment of the clerk to the governors
- Appointment of community, partnership and sponsor governors and associate members, and their removal
- Confirmation of the appointment of the headteacher and deputy head

Functions that the GB may delegate to a committee, but not to an individual

- Functions relating to approval of the first formal budget plan of the financial year
- Functions relating to the alteration, discontinuance or change of category of maintained schools
- Functions relating to school discipline policies
- Functions relating to the exclusion of pupils (except in an emergency, when the Chair of Governors has the power to exercise these functions)
- Functions relating to admissions (VA and foundation schools)
- Functions relating to the school premises, including use of premises and the health and safety policy
- Approval of the school prospectus and School Profile
- Functions relating to the school's curriculum

Activities that must be dealt with by a committee or panel rather than the full GB

- Staff dismissal - including redundancy - and appeals
- Pupil exclusion appeals
- Selection of the headteacher and deputy head (the GB must approve the panel's recommendation)
- Headteacher's performance management
- Salaries of the headteacher and deputy head and award of performance points
- Use of incentive and discretionary allowances for staff
- Admissions (VA and foundation schools)
- School attendance targets
- Appeals against a direction to admit a child

Committee Terms of Reference

Staff Dismissal Committee

Powers	In accordance with Children's Services Authority procedures, to consider and make initial decisions about staff capability, staff discipline and staff dismissal
Status	Statutory
Membership	At least three governors, excluding governors with an interest requiring them to withdraw
Chair	Appointed by GB or committee
Clerk	The clerk to the governing body will clerk the meetings
Meetings	As required. The CSA to be informed of meetings. Confidential.
Quorum	Three governors
Voting	Consensus or majority
Minutes	Confidential to members of the committee. To be distributed within one week

Staff Dismissal Appeals Committee

Powers	To consider decisions made by the Staff Dismissal Committee
Status	Statutory
Membership	At least three governors, excluding governors with an interest requiring them to withdraw and governors on the Staff Dismissal Committee
Chair	Appointed by GB or committee
Clerk	The clerk to the governing body will clerk the meetings
Meetings	As required. The CSA to be informed of meetings. Confidential.
Quorum	Three governors
Voting	Consensus or majority
Minutes	Confidential to members of the committee. To be distributed within one week

Pupil Discipline Committee

Powers	To hear appeals from pupils and their parents or carers on permanent and temporary exclusions. (The committee may also meet if there is concern about the number of temporary exclusions a pupil has received or if an excluded pupil is likely to miss public examinations)
Status	Statutory
Membership	At least three governors with no previous knowledge of and not known personally to the pupil or the parents/carers. The headteacher may not be involved.
Chair	Appointed by GB or committee
Clerk	The clerk to the governing body will clerk the meetings
Meetings	As required. Confidential.
Quorum	Three governors
Voting	Consensus or majority
Minutes	Confidential to members of the committee. To be distributed within one week

Pay Committee

Powers	To review the salaries of teachers as prescribed by the pay policy and notify them of the basis on which their place on the pay spine has been determined. To work with appointed governors to determine the pay of the Headteacher and deputy head. To undertake salary reviews and to make recommendations to the GB
Status	Non-statutory, but strongly recommended
Membership	At least three governors: employees of the school apart from the headteacher may not be members
Chair	Appointed by GB or committee
Clerk	Recommended that the clerk to the governing body clerks the meetings
Meetings	Once a year, usually in the autumn term. Other special meetings if required
Quorum	Three governors
Voting	Consensus or majority
Minutes	Confidential to members of the committee.